

# **The International Trade Center at SIUE to partner in trade mission to Mexico**

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EDWARDSVILLE - The International Trade Center at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (ITC at SIUE) welcomes existing and future exporters to participate in “Discover Mexico,” a four-day trade mission to Mexico from Monday-Thursday, July 23-26.

The Southwest Illinois Trade and Investment Council (SWITIC) will lead the trade mission with the full support of the ITC at SIUE, the Office of Trade and Investment of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

“This trip is a critical part of the SWITIC mission, which is to raise awareness of global exporting and foreign direct investment as an opportunity for economic stability and growth in Southwest Illinois,” said Silvia Torres Bowman, director of the ITC at SIUE.

Mexico is the second-largest goods export market for the U.S. and Illinois and the second largest economy in Latin America. According to Torres Bowman, the ITC at SIUE is creating customized connections and one-on-one conversations for Southwest Illinois mission participants.

Torres Bowman will represent the ITC and SIUE, as she travels with the delegation, assists the group with all involved details and provides consulting support during the trip.

“We know this trip will be one of many that our organization spearheads as a means of helping companies in our region develop long-term relationships with their global customers and partners,” Torres Bowman said. “The International Trade Center at SIUE will be involved in every step of the mission, including collaborating with The State of Illinois Latin America Office in Mexico City and other main economic development corporations to establish mutually beneficial relationships for our region and our businesses.”

The four-day trade mission is unique to other opportunities as participants will spend their first full day in Mexico holding discussions with various professionals who have expertise in trade, logistics, e-commerce, Mexican law and other areas. This differs from most missions’ traditional one to two-hour briefing session.

“This trade mission to Mexico creates an unparalleled opportunity for businesses to gain expert assistance and guidance in developing long-term international opportunities and connections,” said David Kniepkamp, president of the SWITIC Board of Directors and president of Smart Controls, LLC.

Each participating company will have an interpreter and driver. Locations visited will be customized to fit the specific needs of individual participants, and the ITC at SIUE will provide follow up consultation services.

The trade mission is open to Southern Illinois businesses from all industries and sectors with an interest in:

- Exploring export opportunities for their products and services
- Finding or expanding distribution channels
- Getting first-hand market information
- Experiencing the business environment in Mexico

Each mission participant will have the opportunity to join in a series of pre-trip programs, including a webinar “Doing Business with Mexico,” hosted by the ITC at SIUE and PricewaterhouseCooper S.C. in Mexico City. The webinar is scheduled for Monday, May 14.

A limited number of companies will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Recruitment ends Monday, April 30.

Torres Bowman urges interested businesses to indicate their interest now so organizations have time to prepare and support them in mission planning. For information on how your company can participate in Discover Mexico, contact Torres Bowman at [sitorre@siue.edu](mailto:sitorre@siue.edu) or call the ITC at SIUE at 618-650-2452.

The [Southwest Illinois Trade and Investment Council](#) (SWITIC) has been in existence since 2015. The nonprofit organization educates, equips and connects area businesses with the expertise and contacts to begin and expand exporting their products.

The [International Trade Center at SIUE](#) serves businesses in Southern Illinois by providing individualized, no-cost export consultation, identification of foreign buyers, agents and/or distributors through trade leads, international market analysis, and more.

The ITC is funded in part by the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and [Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#). It has a longtime partnership with the Illinois Office of Trade and Investment (OTI), which maintains a full-time staff of both foreign and domestic-based international trade and marketing experts. OTI also manages 7 foreign trade offices located in Belgium, Japan, Hong Kong, Mexico, Canada, China and Israel.